

MARAUDERS OF THE AZURE MAIN (PART ONE)

Andrew Wright

Sir,

I trust this missive finds you in excellent health and wealth. I am sending it from the port of Olac, and it concerns our recent expedition to **the Azure Coast**. This first of several scrolls was written after our initial foray into the city of **Gatina**, the closest large port on the northern shores of Mungoda to our regular shipping route. The approach to Gatina through the outer reef is well-posted with a **light tower**, but **Nascérine**¹ is the traditional language to deal with docking pilots at either the older **East Docks** or the new **West Docks**. Interestingly however, the humble **Matapan** is the preferred currency for smoothing out the various bureaucratic hassles one tends to attract in this sort of place.

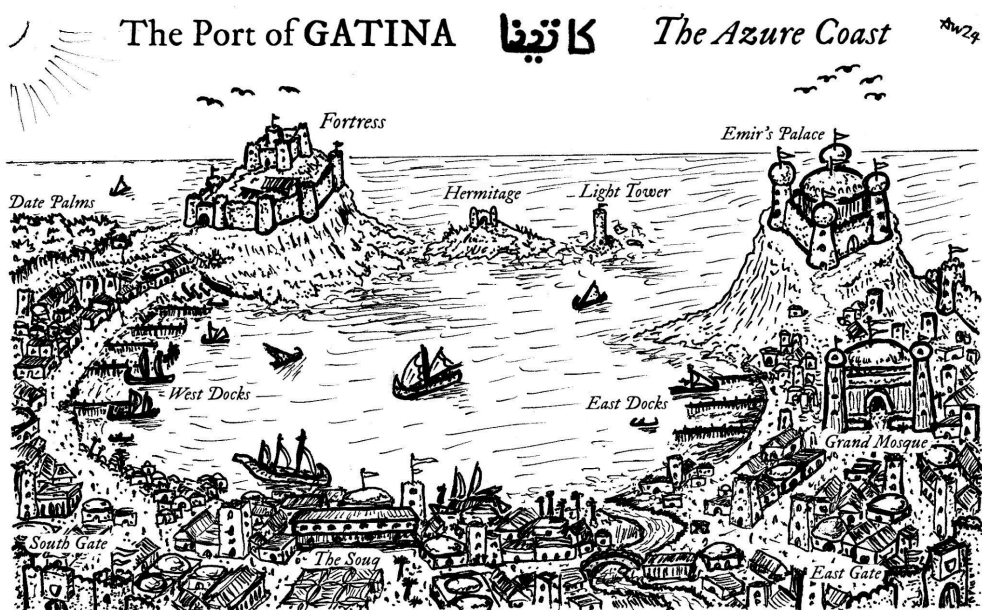
Gatina herself is of somewhat faded grandeur, similar to the shabby coastal settlements of Outremer, with buildings of coral brick and baked mud, between stands of date palms and tamarisk trees. Here and there are crumbling ruined villas hinting at a **classical period** of occupation². Jasmine vines are grown everywhere to mask the stench from the sewers; perhaps unsurprisingly **perfumes** are a desired item by the upper echelons of Gatina society.

Speaking of which, the political situation here is fluid and the endemic factions are noticeably mobile and diverse. The current **Emir, Khassan Al-Hadarak**, claims a mandate from the **Emirate of Marazid** (who have soldiers garrisoned in a large **Fortress**), but is little more than a reformed pirate, ruling from his recently-constructed **Palace** overlooking the bay.

¹ Though Algandarve, Angate and the Coradian Traders' Argot are known.

² Likely both Emphidian and Selentine in vintage.

His court is a seething hotbed of intrigue between Marazidi advisors and Coradian **merchants** from **Algandy** and **Ferromaine**. Other sly persuaders number missionaries from our **One True Faith** (including monks from the island **Hermitage**), and clerics of the **Ta'ashim** (who proselytize from the impressive **Grand Mosque**), who are both equally keen on conversion.



For, despite his title, the Emir still cleaves to the advice of the pagan **Storm-Wizards**, who maintain a presence within Gatina, allied to **nomadic tribes** from both the Desert of Songs and the Azure Coast³. **Capellars** and **Marijah** operatives are certainly present; I did not stray into those troubled waters!

The markets of **the Souq** are intriguing – all our trade would likely turn a profit, bribe dependent – as the common wares number fish (mainly barracuda and swimming crabs), honey, dates (grown in **large plantations**), olives, shagreen (mainly stingrays) and livestock (camels and

³ Who periodically settle within the city, when not wandering.

donkeys have been introduced to the region and thrive particularly along the coast), but rarer items include **star-iron** and **incense blocks** from the desert, plus **pearls**, **ivory** (of diverse sources), **tortoise-shell** and **ambergris**. There are persistent rumours of **ruins full of treasure** out in the wastes, though access is monitored by nomads and the Storm-Wizards.

Attached please find a sketch of the city by our talented helmswoman, Ekaterina Gaskillios, she likewise patrolled the shores for rumours as many failed reprobates from our lands have drifted here in search of adventure and riches. An Emphidian called **Xaxamedes** was observed single-handedly destroying a harbour-side tavern one fine Wotansdae, likely other miscreants abound as well⁴. Current tavern scuttle-butt postulates the existence of a **Kappa** enclave offshore, certainly, in this climate, paranoia is rampant and disappearances worryingly common.

Sir, despite this, Gatina has promise. It will never replace our main routes and interests to be sure, but as a temporary distraction to turn to in times of trouble I do believe it may be quite profitable! Your trusted and esteemed colleague,

Kanthos Viliades

Captain and Attaché of the Wanderer's Regret

⁴ For more details on Xaxamedes, see *Friends or Foes* (p. 59). With some work, other potential Gatina personalities from the same book could include Itz!!kung (p. 33), Mhyse of Chaubrette (p. 39), and Tsef Amashin (p. 52).

The Port of GATINA

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The markets of the **Souq** are intriguing – all our trade would likely turn a profit, bribe-dependent – as the common wares number fish (mainly barracuda and large crabs), honey, dates (grown in large plantations), olives, shagreen (largely stingrays) and livestock (camels and donkeys have been introduced to the region and thrive particularly along the coast), but rarer items include star-iron and incense blocks from the desert, plus pearls, ivory (of diverse sources), tortoise-shell and ambergris. There are persistent rumours of ruins full of treasure out in the wastes, though access is monitored by nomads and the **Storm-Wizards**.

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The Port of GATINA كاتينا The Azure Coast

